



# IN TOUCH

Newsletter by Employees, for Employees of the American Printing House for the Blind, Inc.

May/June 2006

## Superior Customer Service - A Top Priority Throughout APH

**Nancy Lacewell**, Public Affairs

People often think of “customer service” as being solely the responsibility of front-line employees who work directly with the public – those answering phones, taking orders, guiding tours, and providing product training. APH, however, has established a culture in which the work of all departments and all employees ultimately focus on the needs of our customers – people who are blind or visually impaired, their family, friends, and the professionals who work with them.

The Research Department gathers product ideas – from their project leaders and the field - to determine what students need. Graphic designers and Technical Research staff assist project leaders with the design and development of products in partnership



**Dawn Eadens**, Customer Services Representative, greets a customer with a smile.



A 28-year employee with APH, **Darlene Howard** (Braille) checks details carefully. “We always want to be sure the braille is correctly placed on the page so the customer can read it easily,” says Darlene. “The customer is always on the minds of braille production workers.”

with production areas (large type, braille, educational aids...).

Production pays close attention to detail to build excellent products. Narrators, monitors, and proofreaders in the Talking Book Studio make sure that pronunciations are exact, inflections are appropriate, and mistakes are carefully corrected in their contracted work with the National Library Service and others.

Purchasing buys the best quality and most economical materials available, focusing on both high quality products and reasonable sales prices. Shipping and Receiving carefully and efficiently handles raw materials coming into APH and finished products going out. Inventory makes sure we have supplies when they’re needed.



## Superior Customer Service (Continued from Page 1)

Communications develops and distributes product brochures, catalogs, and advertisements – informing our customers of the products available to them as clearly and quickly as possible. Field Services listens closely and responds to suggestions from customers and Ex Officio Trustees, and educates customers on how to use our products most effectively. Public affairs keeps the public and government officials informed on advances at APH, hosts guests as they guide tours through the facility, and maintains and promotes the museum and its wide range of educational programming.

Customer Relations interacts directly with customers by taking phone calls, placing orders, and solving problems. This team of professionals serves as the “front door” to APH and treats each customer call with genuine respect and concern. Repair works carefully to correct mechanical problems and return products to customers quickly. Finance maintains precise records so all orders are properly documented and bills are paid.

Building Maintenance and Housekeeping work hand-in-hand to make sure our workplace is clean and safe – for both staff and visitors. Human Resources recruits and screens the best applicants they can find for the jobs that APH needs to fill.

The Accessible Textbooks Department works with our Trustees to provide braille and large print textbooks to the nation’s students in a timely manner. The Accessible Tests Department works

with test publishers, state departments of education, schools for the blind, and others to provide appropriate and accessible assessment measures for our students. Resource Services makes sure that all APH textbooks, tests, and products, as well as those from 200 other sources, are listed on the Louis Database.

Although these examples don’t include every department or all jobs performed at APH, they paint a picture of the focus on superior

customer service that runs rampant at APH.

Collectively, APH staff performs thousands of different tasks each day, and at first glance these tasks may appear completely unrelated. But they are all tied together by our customers and our efforts to provide them with the best quality products and services possible.

Tuck Tinsley, APH president, says, “We must listen to the voice of the customer if we want to keep improving. I am proud that APH staff consistently goes ‘above and beyond’ to please our customers.”

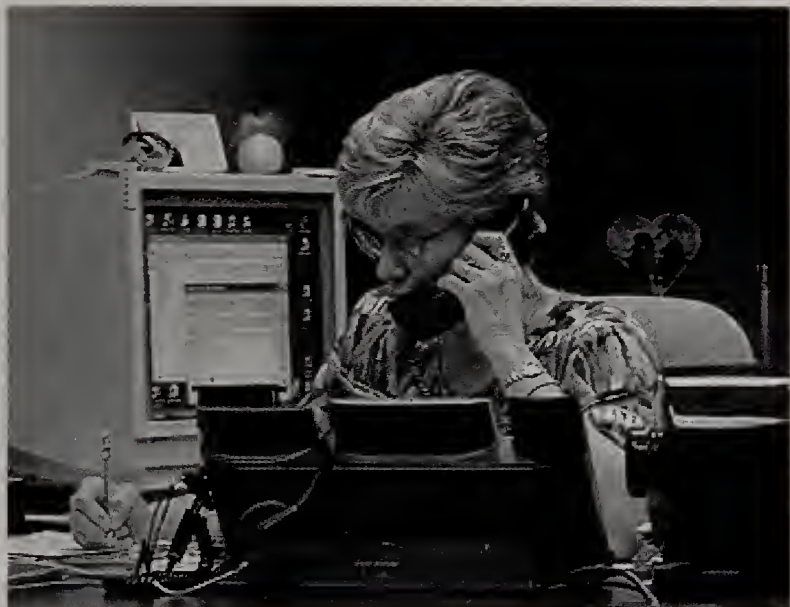
So... what do our customers think of the job that we’re doing? Keep reading this issue of *In Touch* for lots of comments from customers. **APH**

*“Do less than customers expect and service is perceived as bad. Do exactly what customers expect and service is perceived as good. But do more than customers expect and service is perceived as superior!”*  
*John Tschohl, president,*  
*Quality Service Institute*

- Customer Relations receives an average of 45-50 calls from customers each day.
- In March 2006, a total of 3,220 orders were received. Of those, 1,492 came as calls through Customer Relations. The other calls – 1,728 – were orders placed over the internet.

- The number of orders received in September is generally high, particularly for the end of fiscal year Federal Quota orders. In September 2005, 5,537 orders were placed, of which 2,616 came through Customer Relations.





**Rosanne Broome**, Customer Relations Manager, says, "At the end of the day, Customer Relations staff can go home feeling satisfaction that we have made a difference in the lives of our customers. That's a 'good' tired feeling!"

## ...About Customer Service

◆ Part of a recent conversation with a customer: "I sure like dealing with you all at APH. You are not rude. You are very helpful and friendly – not at all like some of those places like New York. Some of them are just plain rude. I got the treatment for them, though. When they start getting rude with me I ask if they're paid to be rude like that and they simmer down right quick!" M.A., Texas

◆ In early 2006, a customer ordered an *Invisiboard*. When she received it she opened the box with a box cutter which cut the canvas bag holding the board. She called APH and asked that we look at how we are boxing this product to see if extra thickness could be added to prevent this from happening to other customers. Customer Relations reported the request to **Arthur Vaughn** (Human Resources), who worked with **B.J. Reece** (Educational Aids) to see what could be done. Changes were promptly made to ensure that the canvas bag would not be damaged in the future

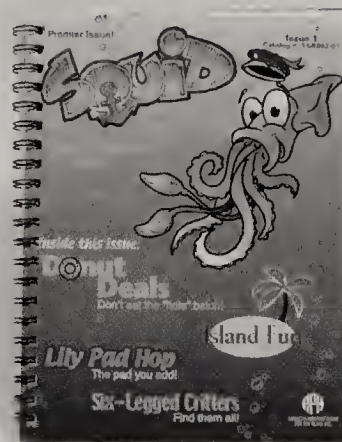
when the *Invisiboard* box is opened. This quick response shows our customers that APH does listen to their suggestions and will make improvements as needed.

◆ A customer sent in a recorder to be repaired. He phoned to say "everyone at APH did a superb job getting his machine fixed and back to him so quickly! The customer service was outstanding." D.B., Ohio

◆ "Just a quick message... The rapid delivery time for our APH orders has been phenomenal in recent months. In late July I ordered some items that I hoped would arrive for a workshop in early August. They were here and are now in the hands of teachers and students. This rate of delivery now seems routine for orders. Please pass on my congratulations to all who are involved in this process. We appreciate your hard work to accomplish this!" D.H., Ex Officio Trustee in Iowa

## ...About APH Products

### *Squid Magazine*



*Squid Magazine* cover

◆ "I just wanted to send a note to say how much we LOVE *Squid Magazine*! I have a 5-year old visually impaired son and we're a homeschooling family. I'm so excited

about it; you've done a wonderful job with the quality and variety of games. My son is thrilled with it and even his sighted siblings are enjoying it. I hope you'll continue to make more!" C.E., Internet



## ...About APH Products



*Talking Thermometer*

### *Talking Clinical Thermometer*

◆ A customer called to say how pleased she was to receive recorded instructions with the

*Talking Clinical Thermometer* she ordered from APH. She was delighted to be able to read the instructions and use the thermometer without having to wait for someone to visit her. She said, "It is really nice that you guys provide instructions we can use instead of just print. If we could read print we wouldn't need the product, so I can't understand why others don't follow your lead." C.W., Tennessee

◆ When she called to order a *Talking Clinical Thermometer* and learned that it comes with tape recorded instructions, a customer began talking about how pleased she is with APH's approach to recognizing the needs of the customers. She said it is frustrating to buy something for the blind, receive it, and then wait until sighted help is available before one can discover how to use it without concern about doing something wrong. She also said our prices are fair and reasonable. J.B., Michigan

### *Talking Typer*

◆ Fred Gissoni passed along this customer "story." Customer Relations has been corresponding with the mother of an 8-year old blind girl from England. She feels her child would benefit from being able to

type on a computer keyboard, but the child's school has discouraged this. The mother wanted to know how she might teach her child to use a keyboard. We suggested she begin with a demonstration download of *Talking Typer*. She did and after just a few days she wrote saying that her child had just mastered the home row of keys. Using British slang she said, "And she was chuffed to bits over it," meaning she was very proud. A week later, the mother wrote to say that her child had mastered the first sentence in the drill "Dad had a salad." She also said that her daughter had received praise from her 11-year old son who said, "She's really quite good, isn't she?" The mother is now beginning to teach the child the use of the abacus and this is helping her considerably with her understanding of arithmetic. The mother wrote, "You are making a significant difference in my daughter's ability to communicate."



*Book Port*

### *Book Port*

◆ An attorney who bought a *Book Port* needed a pause feature on the product for his work and personal use. He called suggesting

that the feature be added, and his request was sent from Customer Relations to Technical Research. It is now a reality and the attorney is thrilled. He said, "Thank you so much for listening and adding the update. I use the *Book Port* daily in my law practice, at home, and at church. It is changing my life!" M.G, Arizona





## About APH Products...(Continued)



◆ “I attended the Arkansas School for the Blind from 1959 through 1967, after which I was mainstreamed. My best and worst memories involve braille books. I loved browsing through

the library and checking out books, but we could only maintain one volume of one book at a time – legally, that is! I became an adroit book thief and only found out much later how much the librarian enjoyed my antics. What librarian could seriously object to someone who loved to read as much as I did – and still do?

“Well, at this point I have over 1,400 volumes of web braille housed in my computer – perhaps 1,000 volumes from *Bookshare*, 4,500 books from *Project Gutenberg*, and 100 or so selections from *Audible.com*. Thank God for *Book Port*, although I was just as excited about *Road Runner* and its three megabytes of built-in memory. The additional storage available nowadays is like heaven – not to mention the flexibility of being able to read just about any kind of file. Gosh, I carry around more braille volumes every day than our school library possessed and think nothing of it! Recipes, medical reference works, several *Bible* translations – you name it! Anything better than this would be pure sci-fi for sure! Guess we’ll eventually be able to scan books directly into this thing and that wouldn’t be so bad either! Hats off to *Book Port*!!!”

◆ A woman wrote about her friend – a woman who is blind – receiving her *Book Port*. “Just wanted to let you know that Susan received the *Book Port* and just loves it. She is so excited about it. She’s

using it already even though she said she still has to read all of the directions on everything it can do. I just want to let you know this has made a big difference to her. Thank you!” S.W., Internet

◆ “I’m a counselor at a community college in El Paso, Texas, where I’ve worked for almost 30 years. I don’t own a great deal of technology – I’ve got a couple of young adult daughters, so you know where my money has gone. You can imagine my delight when a dear friend surprised me with a *Book Port* for Christmas. What I didn’t know was that within a couple of short months, I wouldn’t be able to leave the house without my *Book Port*!

Now for the appreciation: “I had purchased the *Book Port* key from RFB&D and had ordered some books. I was able – seemingly – to activate the key but couldn’t transfer portions of books from the computer to the *Book Port*. I called RFB&D, talked to a *Book Port* owner friend, and had a sighted co-worker observe me going through the registration process for a second time. With no luck, I finally called APH technical support. **Pamela Rader** was fantastic! Though I must have appeared to be clueless, she talked me through the process again and after reformatting the flash drive it was successful! I just can’t say enough about how helpful, patient, and matter-of-fact Pamela was in assisting me with this problem.” A.L., Texas

◆ “APH has done an amazing job supporting and updating this device! And when people address their questions to the APH support staff, they get responses in a timely manner! I have never owned a device that I use more often than the *Book Port* and I have only one regret when it comes to this little bundle of great things – that it wasn’t on the market sooner! Best wishes to all at APH!” R.R., Iowa




## About APH Products...(Continued from Page 5)

### Book Port


◆ "...As the year draws to a close I just want to thank **Larry Skutchan, Pam Rader, and Rob Meredith** for doing such a great job of supporting the *Book Port* over the last year. Over the course of the year, APH has gone in my mind from 'the maker of tape recorders and supplier of magazines I would love but can't afford' to 'the supplier of the world's greatest reading tool.' Thanks for a great product, great support, and a great job." B.T., Internet

◆ An APH ex officio trustee in Indiana passed along some information a vision teacher shared with her. "The teacher has 4 students who use the *Book*

*Port*. The students have differing degrees of vision loss. However, a couple of the students haven't been reading up to their grade levels due to vision loss and other learning factors. With the use of *Book Port*, both now enjoy reading and are reading their classwork at grade level. Thank you, APH!" F.E., vision teacher, Indiana 

## NEXT ISSUE APH Featured Employee

### Who is this? Some "helpful" clues...

- When he was five, he played the part of a maple tree in a Christmas play.
- At age seven, he recited a 16-line poem in Dutch to a church congregation.
- He studied piano for five years.
- As a child, he found scissors and cut his own hair.
- He has been with APH for more than 1 year and less than 25.
- Also when he was young, he took the family telephone apart and had some difficulty getting it put back together. 

*Be first to call us if you know who this is. Becky – ext. 356, or Nancy – ext. 339.*



# Featured Employee: Angie Schulte



**Becky Snider**, Public Affairs



**Angie Schulte** (Human Resources) was named after the main character in a story about young love, an acting role her mother actually played in high school. Angie also identified with a love story character – Liesl of *The Sound of Music*

(**Charmian Carr**). Longing for brothers and sisters, Angie's wish came true during her teenage years as her extended family grew to include 5 step-siblings when her divorced parents remarried. Years later, Angie saw her heroine, Charmian Carr, off-screen at a Hawley-Cooke book signing.

It was a *Long and Winding Road* – between the log cabin near Jackson, Tenn. where her father was born – and APH, where Angie began work in 1999 – not as a *Paperback Writer*, but as a contract worker in the H.R. department. Angie “has bloomed where she was planted.” As Administrative Coordinator, she conducts new employee orientations, creates database reports, and coordinates special events.

Prior to APH, Angie held a variety of jobs. After graduating from UK she taught 4th and 5th graders

in Kentucky. As the Louisville Zoo train engineer, Angie recalls that a *Ticket to Ride* was especially memorable because the train often jumped the tracks. It was not a *Yellow Submarine*, but an M-3 tank Angie drove at Ft. Knox when she was 6 months pregnant and working as a staff member of Senator Mitch McConnell's state office. And no one had to *Hold Her Hand* during the target practice!

Family and music are still central in Angie's life. In fact, Angie's 24 year marriage to Steve started with an innocent question – “Do you like



**Angie Schulte** is surrounded by husband **Steve**, and daughters **Becca** (center), and **Kathleen**.

*The Who?*” – followed by many journeys to *Jethro Tull* concerts, and sealed with a pact to faithfully listen to Rock-n-Roll music into their rocking chair years. Angie was thrilled to be “breathing the same air as Paul” when she and Steve saw Paul McCartney in concert.

Music appreciation is a family tradition. Both daughters, **Kathleen** (20)

and **Becca** (16) attend musical theatre with mom, and have performed in youth musicals like *Godspell*, reflecting the solid religious values instilled in them through Christian Rock Music. Kathleen is a UK sophomore majoring in sociology and a devoted UK basketball fan. Becca, a junior at Ballard High School, recently became a licensed driver. **APH**

## Congratulations!

Without gardening as a clue, only a few people correctly guessed Angie's identity. Congratulations go to **Doug Trent** (Contract Administration) and **Norma Fletcher** (Human Resources) for being among the first to name this mystery employee.





# BULLETIN BOARD

Welcome to APH, new employees! **Scott Smith** (Finance),

**Alejandro Rodas** (Production), **Rodger Miller** (ATIC), **Glenda Powell** (Braille), and **Joon Lee** (Resource Services).

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Congratulations **Dawn Eadens** (Customer Relations) on winning an all-expense paid trip to New York in March. The contest was sponsored by Arby's and WHAS-TV for the Big East Basketball Conference. Dawn and a friend decided to see New York rather than basketball during their stay – catching 3 Broadway plays and a tour of the city. *Congratulations, Dawn!*

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## APH Walking Club

A walking team is being organized at APH, and whether you are a new walker just getting started, or you participated in the Step-it-Up program last year and want to continue – we invite and encourage you to join us! Walking began the week after Derby – on the KSB track after work and at various metro parks on the weekends. All walks are optional, and whether you walk once a week or four times, we guarantee great exercise and lots of fun! To join, contact **Angie Schulte** (Human Resources) ext. 243 or **Tristan Pierce** (Educational Research) ext. 380 and complete a questionnaire to help us determine best times and locations for walks. Let's get moving!



*In Memory of a good friend and dedicated worker...*

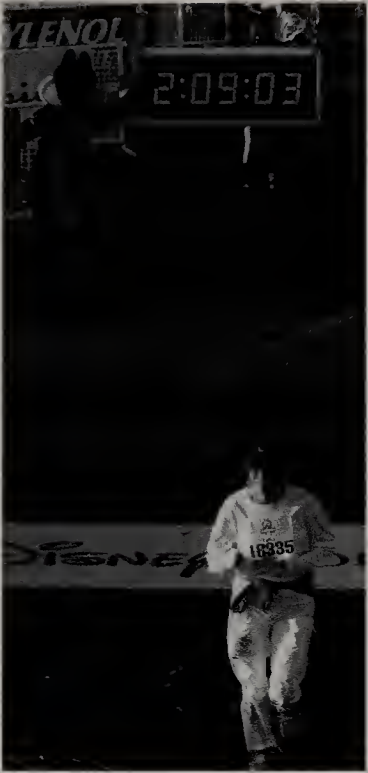
Long-time APH employee **Johnny Phillips** worked until the day he died – September 14, 2005. He joined APH and the Large Type Department in August, 1960, and was well known for his kind heart and dedicated work. **Arthur Vaughn** (Human Resources) said that Johnny never had a bad word to say, and was extremely dependable. "His attendance record for almost 45 years was nothing short of remarkable," said Arthur. **Lila Adkins** (Large Type) called Johnny a good friend and said, "His compassion for others was phenomenal. Johnny is truly missed at APH."



**Rodger Smith**, left, and **Larry Skutchan** (both Technical Research) worked at the APH exhibit while attending the Assistive Technology Industry Association Conference in Orlando, Florida in January. Also participating were **Tristan Pierce** (Educational Research), **Julia Myers** (Resource Services), and **Sandi Baker** (Field Services).



# BULLETIN BOARD



Congratulations to avid runner **Sandi Baker** (Field Services) for completing the Disney World half-marathon run (13.1 miles) in just over 2 hours. Twelve thousand people participated in the event, which was held at Disney World in Florida on January 7th. It was 35 degrees when the race began at 6:00 a.m. It took runners and walkers from Epcot Center through the Magic

Kingdom and Cinderella's castle back through Epcot. Sandi also ran this spring in the Kentucky Derby Mini-marathon with her daughter.

**Don Keefe**, vice president of development, is the proud dad of **Rob Keefe**, co-host of "Real Simple," a TV series that airs on Saturdays at 3:00 p.m. and Sundays at 6:30 a.m. on KET. A New York-based actor who also writes for the magazine "Real Simple," Rob is best known for his work in national commercials and radio and TV voice-overs. Rob is a graduate of Trinity High School, Boston University, and the Royal Shakespeare Company.

*Congratulations to both Rob and Don!*



Congratulations to **Valerie Cox** (Educational Research) on the birth of her first granddaughter, **Jayona Marlyce Love**. Born on January 16, 2006, Jayona weighed 8 lbs. 10 oz. and is the daughter of Valerie's

oldest son, **Jason**. *She's adorable, Valerie!*

Congratulations to **Artina Paris** (Advisory Services) on the birth of her second grandson, **Kedan Lee Paris**, on February 11. Kedan, who weighed 6 lbs. 6 oz., is pictured here with mom, **Brandi** and dad, **Chad** – Artina's son. Pictured with Artina is her oldest grandson, **Daniel Paris**, who turned 2 in February. *Looks like a full house!*



"True happiness comes from the joy of deeds well done and the zest of creating things new."

**Antoine de Saint-Exupery**



## Visitor Feedback

**Nancy Lacewell**, *Public Affairs*

Public affairs staff gathers as much feedback as possible from visitors to APH and the museum so that tours, exhibits... can be tailored to fit their interests and needs. Hundreds of “comment cards” have been collected during the past few years, and many visitors write letters to staff following their tour.

Most of the people visiting APH for the first time are very pleasantly surprised by their experience, saying such things as,

◆ “I have lived in Louisville my entire life and never knew about all of the great work being done for blind people across the country right here at APH. What a tremendous resource our community has!”

◆ “We came because we enjoy factory tours and yours was fascinating. But what amazed us was discovering your magnificent museum! We never even knew it was there!”

◆ “Touring the APH facility and exploring the museum was a wonderful experience for my whole family. We were surprised by the personal attention our tour guide gave us, and by friendly staff greeting us along the way. Thank you for making us feel so welcome. We will definitely come back, and we’ll encourage our friends to visit too!”

Suggestions from visitors are always appreciated. The lack of signs outdoors to publicize the museum, and indoors to direct visitors to the museum is mentioned often as a problem for guests, as is the lack of convenient parking. Several visitors have commented that they would like to have more opportunities to “touch” materials and exhibits. Below are more tour and museum visitor comments.



**Becky Snider** (Public Affairs) explains the braille production process to a group of visitors.

◆ “Our group very much enjoyed our tour of the Printing House and museum. Frankly, we mommies had to almost drag them out of the museum. They were fascinated by all of it – especially the braille writers. Thank you so much for accommodating us so graciously. **Brenna White** did a very nice job with a big group. The whole trip was lovely, from beginning to end. Thanks!!!”

◆ “I love how you can write braille on machines. Even though I have been here before I still love it.” (From a 10 year old visitor) Scottsburg, IN.

◆ “What a great place to have!!! I love it here!!!” (From another 10 year old) Haines City, FL.

◆ “I really liked the ability to be able to write my name in braille (sic). It was cool!” (From an 8 year old who signed her name in simbraille!) Louisville, KY






◆ “Excellent tour guide. Very informative. Good close-ups of equipment and techniques. Thank you for the opportunity to learn so much.” Pittsburgh, PA.

◆ “This is one of the best tours I’ve ever had. The guide was warm and knowledgeable – making us feel very welcome. She really knew her facts and materials! Many thanks.” Cincinnati, OH.

◆ “FANTASTIC! We learned so much. Our guide was very informative and friendly. Thanks!” Owings Mills, MD

◆ “Planned travel schedule to accommodate this tour because it seemed interesting. Was even better and more thorough than I expected. Excellent, fantastic, extremely informative and worthwhile. Would encourage people coming to Louisville not to miss it if they have the time here to seek it out. Glad I came. Glad to see what some of my tax dollars and government support do.” Forest Hills, NY. 

## Continuous Improvement 2005 = 108,000 Dollars and a lot of Sense



**Arthur Vaughn**, Human Resources


We had 10 money-saving ideas during 2005, that ranged from \$717 to \$37,900 in annual savings to APH.

The team of **Tony Grantz** (Business Development), **Phyllis Williams** (Inventory), and **David Manteuffel** (Purchasing) combined efforts for our largest savings of the year. Working with our supplier they discovered a way to save \$37,000 each year on our *Book Port* purchases.

Communications delivered \$13,575 in a single improvement project and Purchasing found numerous ways to save money.

Some of our best successes did not make it into the money savings list, yet had a profound effect on our work environment. We constructed new offices for the ATIC, Accessible Tests, and Cost departments, and the Braille “lean” project was completed, resulting in a cleaner, more efficient work area.

These and other 2005 ideas are featured on the wall outside the Human Resources Department. Stop by and take a look!

*Congratulations to all APH employees on great cost saving ideas!* 



# BIRTHDAYS!

## May

2 John Zinnering	19 Joyce Garner	11 Erin Jones	
5 Mario Eiland	20 Frank Hayden	12 Larry Skutchan	
5 Denise Jones	21 Monica Coffey	12 Debbie Willis	
6 Debbie O'Connell	21 Theresa Close	14 Diana Conley	
7 Alan Lovell	23 Dwight Williams	15 Marguerite Allen	13 Martha Coogle
8 Patty Huff	25 Rosanne Broome	15 Dena Garrett	13 Erica Rucker
10 Marlene Parker	25 Charles Hector	15 Kathy Cockrill	15 Kathy Coddington
11 Barbara Henderson	26 Dawn Eadens	16 Jean Moore	15 Nancy Bayens
12 Ann Martin	26 Sandy Maerz	16 Wilma Druin	17 Karen Poppe
12 Ronald Gwaltney	27 Jan Carroll	19 Edwin Shelton	17 Doug Trent
13 Vikki Kaleta	28 Jerry Cummins	19 Michael McDonald	18 Ted Zinious
13 Jeanette Wicker	29 Becki Moody	25 Charlotte Kelley	18 Nancy Lacewell
13 Jacqueline Bush	29 Karen Luckett	26 Crystal Unthank	22 Kathy Peak
13 Cindy Davis	30 Jason Abadie	28 Seth Moore	26 David McGee
18 Ricky Jones	30 Jane Thompson	28 Dolores Robinson	26 Steve Paris
19 Vicki Judd		29 Martha Coy	28 Maria Delgado
19 Carol Shanks		30 Pat Packer	30 Tuck Tinsley
			30 Joan Goodgine
			30 Fred Major

## June

1 Flora Long
2 Pam Rader
3 Ronald Warren
4 John Aicken
7 Monica Vaught
7 Devon Hershey
8 Rita Mudd
8 Keith Creasy

## July

3 Ann Hill
10 Carl Shultz
10 Inge Formenti
10 Roberta Williams
11 Scott Smith
11 Joy Robinson



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